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## GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Land Acquisition Adjacent to Buffer Preserve On the Bay Side

Submitting Entity: Friends of the St Joseph Bay Preserves

I. Please select one or more eligible activity that the project is classified under:

- ☒ Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- ☒ Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources.
- ☐ Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- ☐ Workforce development and job creation.
- ☐ Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- ☒ Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.
- ☐ Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
- ☐ Planning assistance.
- ☒ Promotion of tourism and seafood in the Gulf Coast region.

II. Please provide an executive summary of the project. Describe/quantify the economic (jobs, infrastructure, tourism, etc.) and environmental benefits (habitat, quality, knowledge, long-term sustainability, etc.).

This project will acquire and restore the adjacent property (approximately .55 acres) located north of the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve next to the Observation Tower area along the Bay. This property has been partially cleared by the landowner, presumably to enhance resale value for prospective buyers. If purchased by the Friends group, it would be restored with native plants and trees, providing a vegetative buffer for the Bay. A nature trail would then connect the Buffer Preserve main Lodge area to the vehicle bridge property, which is also owned by the Buffer but currently separated by this privately-owned parcel. This would provide an uninterrupted strip of land devoid of residential structures along that stretch of Highway C-30A from the Observation Tower north to the bridge and beyond. Acquisition of the property

would further ensure that no residential structure(s) would be constructed adjacent to the Observation Tower, obstructing the view of St. Joseph Bay and the marshlands to the north and detracting from the positive experience so many visitors to the tower have commented on.

- III. Please provide a cost summary/budget. Detail any matching/cooperative funds available for use, and any cooperative support from governmental or other agencies.

Estimated Cost:

Land Acquisition .....	\$ 100,000.00
Land Restoration .....	\$ 5,000.00
Nature Trail, Signage, and Fence .....	<u>\$ 8,000.00</u>
Total Cost .....	\$ 113,000.00

Possible partners and other organizations offering cooperative support include, but are not limited to: Gulf County, including the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (TDC); The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC); Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of Greenways and Trails; National Audubon Society.

- IV. Please provide a timeline for project completion. Explain the technical and environmental feasibility (including any permitting considerations) of the project.

The land acquisition for this property would take an estimated three (3) months, while restoration and trail development could take an additional three (3) months, weather permitting, for total project duration of approximately six (6) months. There are no known technical or environmental difficulties associated with this project so the feasibility should be considered moderate to high. The only unknown is the seller's willingness to negotiate in good faith and in a reasonable manner.

- V. Please provide the qualifications of the Submitting Entity, the financial feasibility/sustainability and the economic feasibility and sustainability of the project (probability of success, etc.).

The Friends of the St. Joseph Bay Preserves is a not-for-profit Citizen Support Organization (CSO) that has been in existence for over nine years. It was established to protect, preserve and support the St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve and the St Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve. The Friends raise funds and provide volunteer services to help manage the Preserves and foster better understanding and enjoyment of the Buffer Preserve and the Bay. With a current membership of nearly 200 individuals and families, and annual visitors during our Fall and Winter Bay Day events alone totaling over 700, the probability of success for this project is great. Donations received from the many tourists and local visitors to the Lodge, especially during Bay Day events, will insure the sustainability of this project.

In addition, this area may also be used by the public for controlled and safe access to the Bay during the very popular scallop season, when additional donations for parking at the Preserve might be collected to further sustain the project goals.

- VI. Please provide the anticipated results of the project, and whether it is included in a City of Port St. Joe, City of Wewahitchka or Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan?

This project, when completed, will promote eco-tourism as well as environmental awareness of both the Aquatic Preserve and the Uplands Buffer Preserve, with additional visitors seeking safe parking during the busy scallop season. As an alternative to pulling off the road and parking on the shoulder, visitors and tourists could park at the Preserve, thereby reducing the possibility of vehicle and pedestrian accidents along that stretch of Highway C-30A – an area that becomes very congested during the summer months. As previously mentioned in Item II above, obtaining this parcel will provide a vegetative buffer by eliminating the construction of a residential structure so close to the Bay waters.



The following Goal(s), Objective(s) and/or Policies included in the *Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan* will be met, in part, by this project:

### **Chapter 1: Land Use Element**

**POLICY 1.1.9 (c):** *To promote the protection of wetlands and surface water resources in all coastal, inland riverine and isolated wetlands.....The County shall: require the use of vegetated buffer zones adjacent to wetlands and surface waters consistent with the following standards herein and as prescribed in Future Land Use Element 1.1.10 and 2.2.1.*

### **Chapter 5: Coastal Management Element**

**POLICY 1.1.5:** *Gulf County will continue to promote a program of community awareness to prevent future disruptions and degradations of coastal resources.*

### **Chapter 6: Conservation Element**

**OBJECTIVE 1.3:** *Gulf County will strive to conserve, appropriately use, and protect the quality and quantity of current and projected water sources and waters that flow into estuarine waters or oceanic waters by implementing Policies 1.3.1 through 1.3.9.*

**OBJECTIVE 1.4:** *Gulf County will conserve, appropriately use, and protect its natural resources, including fisheries, wildlife, wildlife habitat, marine habitat, minerals, soils, and native vegetative communities by implementing Policies 1.4.1 through 1.4.11.*

**POLICY 1.4.4:** *Gulf County will cooperate with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District to provide the fullest protection to County, State, and Federally-owned areas identified in the conservation and recreation elements that have been set aside for the protection of natural resources and public recreation.*

### **Chapter 7: Recreation and Open Space Element**

**GOAL 1:** *To provide recreational opportunities and open space for the current and future residents and visitors of Gulf County.*

**OBJECTIVE 1:** *Gulf County will ensure that publicly-owned recreation facilities are physically accessible to all County residents by implementing Policies 1.1 through 1.4.*

Submitted By:



President, Board of Directors

2-26-13

Signature

Title

Date

Friends of the St Joseph Bay Preserves  
Company Name

3915 Highway C 30  
Address

Port St Joe, FL 32456  
Address

850-229-1787 Home: 850-229-2566  
Telephone Number


ehрман.john@yahoo.com  
E-mail Address (if applicable)

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA  
**RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE (R.A.C.)**  
1000 CECIL G. COSTIN SR. BLVD., ROOM 312, PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA 32456  
PHONE (850)229-6144 • FAX (850) 229-9252 • EMAIL: tkopinsky@gulfcounty-fl.gov

**PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY AND PUBLIC ACCESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR  
GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT APPLICANTS**

I, JOHN EHRLMAN the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity FRIEND OF STJB PRESERVES and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal titled LAND ACQUISITION ADJACENT TO BUFFER ON BAY SIDE hereby acknowledge, consent and accept the following representations that coincide with my/our submission for consideration, evaluation and possible recommendation and approval by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for funding from the RESTORE Act distribution that strictly complies with the guidelines and regulations set forth under the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012:

1. I/We am the authorized representative of the application/pre-proposal referenced above.
2. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Gulf County Public Records policy.
3. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Florida Statute Chapter 119 which controls and permits public access to information.
4. I/We hereby acknowledge, consent and agree to the controlling policies and statutes above as well as the free and open exchange of any and all submissions provided hereunder this application/pre-proposal and all information exchanged hereafter including but not limited to further amendments to these proposals as well as surveys, studies, research, data production, books, drawings, property records, work papers, county owner lists, files, forms, reports, accounts, documents, manuals, handbooks, instructions, printouts relating in any manner for the production of the application. In addition, all papers, notes, data, reference material, documentation, programs, printouts, and all other media and forms of expression that in any way include, incorporate or reflect any confidential information of what ultimately shall become the Gulf County plans for use and application of the RESTORE Act funding.
5. I/We acknowledge, agree and fully consent to cooperate with the appointed Gulf County RESTORE ACT committee, county officials and staff as a continuing obligation and condition of final review for this RESTORE Act application/pre-proposal.
6. I/We have submitted this acknowledgment to Gulf County RESTORE Act Committee and the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for the purpose and intent of receiving an evaluation, review and possible recommendations for anticipated funding from the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012.

  
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Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant  
  
John Ehrman  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Date: 2-28-2013